

Personal Sentiment and Marketing of Electronic Cigarettes Among Twitter Users

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The use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) is growing in the United States and there is increasing controversial dialogue surrounding e-cigarettes on social media, including Twitter. With the recent spike in popularity, we conducted a systematic review of the literature to: a.) examine what Twitter users are exposed to regarding e-cigarettes, and b) identify potential ramifications for this exposure. Using pre-designated inclusion and exclusion criteria, relevant articles were located using PubMed, EMBASE, EBSCOhost, and CINAHL Complete and reviewing reference lists of relevant articles. Full text, English language, peer-reviewed articles relevant to e-cigarette dialogue on Twitter were reviewed. Of the twelve studies, seven met the inclusion criteria. From our analysis of the content, two key themes were found: marketing (predominant theme) and positive personal sentiment regarding e-cigarette use. Also, within our review, common ramifications for increased marketing and positive sentiment were identified. First, the rise in marketing reaching vulnerable populations, specifically adolescents and young adults, may contribute to the growing use of e-cigarettes and influence positive perceptions of these smoking behaviors. Second, there is controversial information shared regarding the health effects of e-cigarette use. This is an emerging topic and there is relatively scant literature available related to e-cigarette dialogue on Twitter. As a result of our review, we recommend Twitter as a platform for methodically analyzing social media trends and informing health care providers of current issues regarding e-cigarettes. Although more research on the health risks of e-cigarettes is required, there is the need for the current health information on e-cigarettes to be disseminated through Twitter. Health care providers also need to discuss e-cigarette use with patients in the clinical settings. Continued surveillance of e-cigarette use and marketing, as well as examination of the necessity for marketing regulations are important as e-cigarette use becomes more prevalent.

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